10 Transformative Charts from the Past Decade of Development (Part 1)

How has development transformed over the past decade? What ideas have changed the way we think about issues like education, migration, microfinance, and inequality? Since 2013, the World Bank’s Policy Research Talks have explored ideas that can change the way that the Bank and the broader global community do development. From the now famous elephant graph to themes that became central to future World Development Reports, many early-stage ideas from research and data first entered the public square through this series.

Read the blog

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

In this month’s edition of the research newsletter, we are highlighting some of the research presented over the last decade in our Policy Research Talk series.

✓ A Dime a Day: The Possibilities and Limits of Private Schooling in Pakistan

The number of private primary schools in Pakistani villages climbed from 3,300 in 1982 to 32,000 in 2000, offering a dramatic expansion of the education ecosystem. Research shows private schools tend to locate in villages where they can hire low-paid moderately educated women who want to work and can teach at the primary level, thus lowering fees for parents to a dime a day (6 Rupees). The data also show that villages with private schools have greater overall enrollment and that the average child in private schools performs better than the top one-third of children in public schools.

✓ Moving for Prosperity: Global Migration and Labor Markets
If we were to move 100 million young people from developing countries to high-income countries, the annual income gain would be $1.4 trillion. But this potential increase in welfare remains untapped. About 3 percent of the world’s population live in a country in which they were not born, a proportion that has not changed in six decades. The report presents market-oriented, economically motivated rationales to counter-balance the political opposition to migration.

✓ Enrollment without Learning: Teacher Effort, Knowledge, and Skill in Primary Schools in Africa

Many children in low-income countries complete their primary education unable to read, write, or do simple arithmetic. These papers look at the learning crisis in primary schools in seven Sub-Saharan African countries via direct observations, unannounced visits, and test scores to quantify teacher effort, knowledge, and skills—and their effects on learning.

✓ Making Schools Work: New Evidence on Accountability Reforms

This book is about the threats to education quality that cannot be explained by lack of resources. It uses evidence from impact evaluations to review and assess a variety of accountability-based approaches that developing countries are experimenting with in their quest for better schools.

✓ The Microfinance Business Model: Enduring Subsidy and Modest Profit

Microfinance institutions are meant to serve borrowers ill-served by traditional commercial banks, and many of them do so quite well—the industry reached 211 million global customers in 2013. But the cost of making small loans to the poorest clients is high, and often exceeds the revenues from such loans, which raises a need for subsidies. While recent experimental research indicates that the benefits of microcredit to borrowers may be modest, so too are the subsidies required to serve small borrowers sustainably, if those subsidies are well allocated.

✓ Global Income Distribution: From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the Great Recession

An improved panel of national household survey data taken from between 1988 and 2008 provided a first look at a global growth incidence curve now known as the “elephant graph.” 90% of the fastest growing country-deciles are from Asia, while almost 90% of the worst performers are from rich countries. Another “winner” was the global top 1%. Hence the global growth incidence curve
has a distinct supine S shape, with gains highest around the median and top. This is consistent with both a fall in extreme global poverty and a rise in inequality in richer countries.

To access the latest Policy Research Working Papers, please click here.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **February 25**: Policy Research Talk: The Distributional Effects of International Trade: Facts and Misconceptions
- **March 9**: The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty: Description, Measurement and Action
- **March 16–20**: Land and Poverty Conference 2020 | Institutions for Equity and Resilience
- **April 21**: Policy Research Talk: The Economics of Power Markets in Developing Countries

To see more events, please click here.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Call for Papers: Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics 2020: Global Unrest**

The organizing committee is calling for innovative papers on the drivers of global dissatisfaction, its similarities and differences with previous episodes of widespread civic unrest, whether and how such discontent can be addressed, and whether there may be common threads connecting these developments.

More information | Deadline: March 16, 2020 | Contact: abcde@worldbank.org.

**World Development Report 2021 will be the first WDR report on the role of Data for Development**

*Pinelopi Goldberg | Let’s Talk Development, January 7, 2020*

This topic comes at a critical time for development. We know that high quality development data is the foundation for meaningful policy-making, effective public service delivery, transparent accountability and increased economic activity through private sector growth. As we enter the final decade in which to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we find ourselves amid revolutionary changes in how we collect, manage, curate, analyze and use data. It’s claimed that more data was created in 2015 and 2016 than in all previous years combined. Fixed internet traffic is expected to double, mobile internet traffic to quadruple between 2017 and 2021. New business models based on the collection and analysis of data have gained increasing economic significance, with data-oriented companies now among the largest globally by market capitalization. Even as these technological advances improve the availability and use of data, data is still scarce where it’s most needed.

[Read the blog](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

**Sexual Violence against children, mentoring programs, and small cash transfers**

*Berk Özler | Development Impact, January 27, 2020*

Today’s subject matter is depressing. But, it is also worth continuing to read because, for many, the numbers will be eye-opening, and because with an improved focus on the types of programs targeted to communities suffering from these problems, we may be
able to substantially improve the welfare of children and women.

New data explores financial risk management in African agriculture

Dorothe Singer, Jake Hess, Saniya Ansar | All About Finance, January 22, 2020

In our latest World Bank working paper we explore how adults who rely on growing crops or raising livestock as their household’s main source of income manage financial risk and use financial services. We do so by analyzing data from a new module on agricultural risk management added to the 2017 Global Findex questionnaire in 15 lower-middle- and low-income Sub-Saharan African economies. Data are based on a nationally representative survey of about 1,000 adults in each economy and reported averages are population weighted. Here are three key findings.

Survey methods — curated blogs

Florence Kondylis, David McKenzie | Development Impact, January 17, 2020

This list is a companion to our curated list on technical topics. It puts together our posts on issues of measurement, survey design, sampling, survey checks, managing survey teams, reducing attrition, and all the behind-the-scenes work needed to get the data needed for impact evaluations.

The Fight against Corruption: Taming Tigers and Swatting Flies

Lay Lian Chuah, Norman V. Loayza, and Bernard Myers, Research & Policy Brief, Bank Knowledge and Research Hub, Malaysia, January 2020.

This brief synthesizes research on the causes and consequences of corruption. It also proposes reforms to combat grand and petty corruption that can be effective even in less developed countries.

Inequality and trade: Simulation evidence for 54 developing nations

Erhan Artuc, Guido Porto, Bob Rijkers | VoxEU article, January 6, 2020

Questions about who benefits from free trade—and at what cost—have resurfaced as part of the backlash against globalisation. This column uses data from 54 low- and middle-income countries to show that in a majority of cases, trade liberalisation increases both incomes and inequality. Most of these trade-offs resolve in favour of liberalisation; despite exacerbating income disparities, trade liberalisation creates overall social welfare gains.

The new World Development symposium on experiments in development

David McKenzie | Development Impact, January 06, 2020

Following the announcement of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics, Arun Agrawal, the editor of World Development decided to put together a special issue on perspectives on the experimental approach to development and poverty alleviation. This was done incredibly quickly, with authors submitting an abstract first, being accepted largely on this basis, and then being asked to write about 1000-1500 words within three weeks. This World Development symposium is now up online, and some summary is discussed by Arun in this twitter thread and by the editors in this introduction piece.
Banking regulation and supervision: conceptual framework and stylized facts

Bob Cull and Davide Salvatore Mare | All About Finance, January 6, 2020

The first chapter of the recently released Global Financial Development Report 2019/2020: Bank Regulation and Supervision after the Global Financial Crisis presents both the theoretical premises for bank regulation and supervision and the associated polices that have been enacted across countries. Prompted by the worst financial crisis since The Great Depression, these topics have been hotly debated, and the report re-visits and summarizes those debates and subsequent developments. But unlike other reports and analyses, the focus of the report is on how changes in bank regulation and supervision have affected less developed economies.

Read the blog

To read more of our blogs, see: Let’s Talk Development | Development Impact | All About Finance

To read previous editions of the newsletter, see: Research Newsletter Archive

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